DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 097 830 HE 005 984

AUTHOR Ganzemiller, Jack A.
TITLE An Investigation of Various Methods Used in Awarding Academic Credit for Non-Traditional Learning Experiences. Final Report.
INSTITUTION Wisconsin Univ. - Stout, Menomonie.
PUB DATE 30 Jun 73
NOTE 45p.

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.75 HC-$1.85 PLUS POSTAGE
DESCRIPTORS Accreditation (Institutions); *College Credits; Colleges; *Continuous Learning; *Educational Policy; Guidelines; *Higher Education; *Learning Experience; Questionnaires; Research Projects; Universities

ABSTRACT

In an effort to investigate various methods used in awarding academic credit for nontraditional learning experiences, this study analyzed a 3-page questionnaire returned from 229 U.S. colleges and universities offering at least a bachelor's degree. The major portion of the schools responding were public institutions, located in the Midwest, with an enrollment of between five and ten thousand, and on a semester time schedule. Wide variances were found between schools even in accrediting so-called "traditional" courses taught in a lecture situation. Accrediting agencies have just begun the task of establishing specific guidelines for crediting nontraditional learning activities. Most schools have no specific policies of their own for crediting these experiences. The majority of schools are awarding credit for many different types of nontraditional learning activities. The criteria most used in crediting various activities were: sponsoring departmental judgment, the advice of the involved faculty member, and time expended on the activity. The majority of schools are planning some enlargement in this area of crediting nontraditional learning activities within the next 2- to 3-year period. Although there is increasing interest by some groups for this "opening up the options" to meet graduation requirements, there is also a counter current hesitation and in some cases opposition to this movement by some faculty members. (Author/MJM)

ED 097830

Final Report

Account #101-30-25-30986

An Investigation of Various Methods Used in Awarding Academic Credit for Non-Traditional Learning Experiences

by

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
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June 30, 1973

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SUMMARY

This study consisted mainly of an analysis of a three page questionnaire returned from 229 U.S. Colleges and Universities offering at least a Bachelor's Degree. The major portion of the schools responding were public institutions, located in the Mid-West, with an enrollemnt of between five and ten thousand, and on a semester time schedule.

Wide variances were found between schools even in accrediting so-called "traditional" courses taught in a lecture situation. Accrediting agencies have just begun the task of establishing specific guidelines for crediting non-traditional learning activities. Most schools have no specific policies of their own for crediting these experiences.

The majority of schools are awarding credit for many different types of non-traditional learning activities. Independent Study programs are most frequently mentioned with Volunteer Activities being the least accepted on most campuses.

The criteria most often used in crediting various activities were: sponsoring departmental judgement, the advise of the involved faculty member, and time expended on the activity. The relative weight and position of these and other criteria though varied depending upon the activity (e.g. C.L.E.P. tests were used by more schools than any other single evaluation tool in determining credits for learning obtained before enrollment.)

The majority of schools are planning some enlargement in this area of crediting non-traditional learning activities within the next 2-3 year period. Although there is increasing interest by some groups (particularly students) for this "opening up the options" for meeting graduation requirements, there is also a counter current of hesitation and in some cases opposition to this movement by some faculty members. The majority of academic administrators caught in this squeeze plus others of enrollment and corresponding budget cuts appear to be looking for some hard firm facts and guidelines to follow as their schools move down these pathways. The hope is that the pathways lead to an improved system, but some appear to be a short-cut to disaster.

This report is no panacea of information and startling conclusions, but hopefully a possible aid in selecting a few turns on the rocky road to the future when some day a non-traditional learning experience may be a 50 minute lecture course taught on campus.

I. INTRODUCTION

The word "non-traditional" used in this report relates to learning activities engaged in other than related to the traditional 50 minute lecture/lab on-campus classroom course. This by no means is meant to imply that educational programs need be off campus in non-structured time blocks to be innovative, of good quality, or that non-structure leads to better teaching/learning for all students, or perhaps even the majority. There is also probably less similarity between some "traditional" courses and programs even on the same campus many times than between some "non-traditional" courses and programs on different campuses.

The purpose of this study was originally to give our Institution a better understanding of how far the pendulum of non-traditional learning activities had progressed in other colleges and universities, but primarily in similar size and type institutions. Of special interest was the area of what criteria was being used to determine the educational worth in credits for various non-traditional learning experiences. Since our school has had several such programs operating for several years, it was important to us to discover if we were "over" or "under" crediting some activities as related to our sister institutions. We desired to know how various accrediting agencies were viewing this growing area of higher education and what the future trends in this area seemed to be.

Only a couple hundred dollars for a part-time typist for a month was thus requested for a small investigation in this area. From those modest intents and resources (long since depleted) we have already received over 400 inquiries from several foreign countries as well as throughout the United States for the results.

The results of this study are definitely not going to cause any waves or even ripples in academic circles and will be a disappointment to many. Especially those who are looking for that one report or book to provide them with all the answers. However, there are some facts and information in this report which may contribute in some small measure to a more thorough understanding of the problems and potentials of education in non-traditional locations and under non-traditional time schedules. Data in this report is given primarily in charts, graphs, and lists. Interpretations of data by the author are kept to a minimum and are left for the readers to ponder and relate to their own individual needs.

Thanks especially go to a small but very important number of respondents. These persons not only took the time to carefully complete the questionnaire, include many supplemental materials, but in several cases wrote long detailed letters of problem areas, new programs, and sources of additional information.

II. RESULTS

The major source of information for this report was obtained from a three page questionnaire mailed to 365 Colleges and Universities in the U.S. offering at least a Bachelor's degree. A copy of the questionnaire can be found in the appendix along with a letter which was tape typed individually to the Vice President of Academic Affairs at each school.

Since the sponsoring institution for this research is State supported, Mid-Western located, has an enrollment of approximately 5000, and is on a semester time schedule; the majority of schools contacted fell into these same areas. (67% Public, 39% Midwest, 36% Enrollment 5000-10,000, and 66% Semester Schedule). However many private schools, institutions in all 50 states, colleges with enrollments of less than 1000 to over 50,000, and schools on various time schedules were surveyed. An alphabetical listing of those schools responding are included in the appendix. Graphs 6,7,8 and 9 indicate the characteristics of both the schools surveyed and those responding. These show that percentage wise at least those responding with useable questionnaires (63% or 229 returned of 365 sent out) were a close representation of those contacted.

Since some of the more interesting data listed in this report are in the form of short comments relating to various questions, the lower part of Graph 9 may be of interest. It indicated the rank and/or responsibility of those persons responding. The remainder of this section will be largely devoted to the results of various sections of the three page questionnaire used in the study.

GENERAL BACKGROUND INFORMATION
(1st page of questionnaire)

The purpose of the first section of the questionnaire was to obtain some base information so proper comparisons could be made and to investigate what other information on this subject was known by the respondents. The first two questions on the questionnaire related to the number of credits necessary to obtain a Bachelor's degree at each institution and the time schedule they were on. (see top of Graph 9 in appendix) This was necessary to insure that on subsequent questions regarding credits awarded for various activities, that the worth and type of credit be kept segregated for comparison sake. The only small surprise was the number of schools (9%) orientated towards giving a credit/course and thus requiring 30-40 of these credits to graduate.

The second two questions were put in to attempt to see if indeed there was a common base of crediting traditional or at least semi-traditional classes. Those questions are next listed followed by the response.

QUESTION I-C

For a traditional lecture type class say in History, meeting for one hour lecture periods, 3 days a week, over an entire enrollment period (quarter or semester)- how many credits would you normally allow?

_____credits

RESULTS OF QUESTION I-C

School Calendar	Range	Mode	Average	Number Responding
Semester	1-4	3	3.06	149
Quarter	3-5	3	3.10	55
Credit/Course	.5-2	1	1.02	16

QUESTION I-D

During the summer or other times, if you offer a special concentrated course say in English, meeting for a two week period, 6 to 8 hours each day, 5 days a week - how many credits would you normally give?

_____credits

RESULTS OF QUESTION I-D

School Calendar	Range	Mode	Average	Number Responding
Semester	2-8	3	3.27	111
Quarter	2-10	3,4,5&6	5.04	41
Credit/Course	.5-1	1	.9	5

These seemingly insignificant questions may perhaps hold a key to some of the real problems in obtaining a comparison of crediting non-traditional learning activities. As can be seen, from Question I-C we don't have to even get into non-traditional learning before we find great differences between crediting the same classes among various schools. The range of credits of 1-4, 3-5, and .5-2 are actually tremendous when we realize the question related to a common type traditional offering at most schools. Throughout this investigation many schools have alluded to the fact that they use the "Carnegie" formula or system of crediting. However, through time many interpretations of the "Carnegie" system have developed (like the Bible) so that some versions are hardly comparable with others. Several studies of crediting have been already accomplished in the so called traditional area but time was not available to pursue them. However if nothing else, these two questions and their results show

some of the serious problems of comparing the crediting between school of any learning activity let alone the tremendous range of non-traditional experience. This is the problem many Accrediting agencies are continually confronted with. Therefore the next question was an attempt to learn some of the attitudes presently being given on non-traditional learning by various Accrediting organizations.

QUESTION I-E

Have you ever received any information from accrediting agencies as to their opinions or reactions regarding awarding credits toward graduation for non-traditional learning activities?

Yes_____No_____

If yes, please list their reaction or send a copy of their policy regarding such.

RESULTS OF QUESTION I-E

Total Responses = 214
Yes = 18 responses or 8%
No = 196 responses or 92%

CONDENSED COMMENTS TO I-E

"North Central has accredited University Without Walls"
"Western Association of Schools and Colleges is raising the question but not yet ready to establish specific guidelines."
"anything done consistently as a function of policy is O.K. with them"
"Our agency is cautiously positive in this area."

Several references were made to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools and especially to their Standard #9. By far though the most interesting information came from "A Statement on the Accreditation of Non-Traditional Degree Programs", which was a final report of a committee of the Federation of Regional Accrediting Commissions. This Committee on Non-Traditional Study was chaired by Paul Dressel of Michigan State University. This summary report dated September 25, 1972 was the result of three meetings and recommended a standing committee of FRACHE to "assure some measure of uniformity in approach by the regional accrediting commissions, a high degree of flexibility and understanding in dealing with innovations, and a continuing communication and feedback informing all institutions about the nature, adaptability, and values of both the new educational ventures and the accreditation techniques or procedures developed to more effectively appraise them".

Perhaps a listing of this report's General Policies section will provide persons with some insight into its recommendations.

" General Policies

1. Accreditation will be considered only when a number of individuals have been granted or have qualified for a degree by the various patterns indicated. Consideration of students' completed programs and student reactions are deemed indispensable to accreditation.

2. Accreditation procedures and criteria should be comprehensive, flexible, and fair. Evaluation committees should include persons who have experience in non-traditional programs and/or who are sufficiently conversant and understanding to review innovations competently.

3. An institution which, by the nature of its program, abandons or renders nonfunctional traditional criteria and mechanisms of review and control aimed at assuring quality must accept responsibility for indicacing alternative ways in which quality will be assured."

The final question in this General Background Section was an attempt to unearth some literary "Jewels" related to the crediting of Non-traditional learning. The question was stated as:

QUESTION I-F

If you know of any books or articles relating to the subject of crediting non-traditional learning activities, it would be sincerely appreciated if you could list them.

The results of this question are listed next. Two points of interest. First, the listing is just as it was given us and occasionally pertinent information is lacking. Second, even though there are a few overlaps the reader may also want to carefully review the "List of Books and Articles Reviewed for this Report" which is placed at the end of the appendix. It would be expected that the next year or two will most certainly yield a substanial number of articles and books related to this growing area of Higher Education as the volume seems to definitely have increased within the past year.

Books and Articles As Recommended to Us From Question I-F

Caseel, Burke, The Individualized Competency--Based System of Teacher Education at Weber State College, Washington, DC: American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education.

Curtis and Wortegm (?), "Evaluating Non-Traditional Higher Education: A New Perspective," Governor's Statement.

Featherstone, Joseph, Informal Schools in Britain Today: An Introduction, NY: Citation Press, 1971.

Givens, Paul R., "Student Designed Curricula," Research Currents, ERIC Clearinghouse on Higher Education, May 15, 1972.

Gould, Samuel, ed., Diversity by Design, 1973.

Gould, Samuel B., and K. Patricia Cross, Explorations in Non-Traditional Study, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1972.

London, Herbert, "University Without Walls: Reform or Rip-Off?" Saturday Review--Education, October, 1972, p.63.

Milton, Ohmer, Alternatives to the Traditional, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1972.

Puicci, Virginia, Leon Jones and Curtis David, An Upper Division University, a paper prepared for the 1971 National Conference of Experimental Living-Learning Programs, The University of Nebraska.

Smith, G. Kerry, ed., New Teaching, New Learning, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1971.

Spickelmier, Don O., and Kenneth H. Freeman, A Survey of Policies and Practices Relating to Non-Traditional Educational Experiences, Lubbock, Texas: College of Education, July, 1972.

Valley, John R., An Inventory of External Degree Programs and Proposals, ETS, Princeton, March, 1971.

A Supplement to An Inventory of External Degree Programs and Proposals, ETS, May, 1971.

Vermilye, Dyckman W., ed., The Expanded Campus, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, December, 1971.

A Look at Non-Traditional Study, Coe College, Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

article on Non-Traditional Study in Chronicle of Higher Education, February, 1973.

"College Accreditation Policies for Non-Traditional Education," Commission of Accreditation of Service Experiences, American Council on Education, One Dupont Circle, Washington, DC.

"College Credit for Life Experiences," School and Society, Summer, 1971.

"College Without Walls: No Ivy or Moss," National Observer, December 2, 1972.

"Community College for All," Intellect, 101:146-47, December, 1972.

Credit by Examination for College-Level Studies: An Annotated Bibliography, CEEB, New York, 1967.

"Evaluation of Non-Traditional Educational Experiences," College and University, Summer, 1972.

"The Extended University--Dream or Reality," College and University, Summer, 1972.

The External Degree, John Valentine, Executive Secretary, Commission on Non-Traditional Study, Liberal Education, May, 1972.

"External Degrees and College Credit by Examination," Interim Report by the Connecticut Commission for Higher Education, Hartford, January, 1972.

"External Study for Post-Secondary Students," A Brief Annotated Bibliography of Recent Publications, Office of External-Study Programs, CEEB, New York, February, 1972.

"A Supplement of External Study for Post-Secondary Students," as above, August, 1973.

"First Year Findings of the Commission on Non-Traditional Education," unpublished speech by George Hanford, Executive Director, CEEB, New York, March, 1972.

"Five Articles on Non-Traditional Educational Concepts," reprinted from College Board Review, CEEB, New York, #85, Fall, 1972.

A Guide to the Evaluation of Educational Experience in the Armed Services, C. P. Turner, ed,m American Council on Education, Washington, DC, 1968.

"An Idea for Learning by Working Off-Campus," The Stanford Observer, June, 1972.

Less Time, More Options, CEEB.

New Dimensions for the Learner, A First Look at the Prospects for Non-Traditional Study, Commission on Non-Traditional Study, New York, September, 1971.

New Dimensions in Higher Education are available from the Superintendent of Documents, U. S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC:

1. "Independent Study," Winslow Hatch and Ann Bennet, 1960, 36pp.
2. "Study Abroad," Irwin Abrams, 1960, 21pp.
3. "Advanced Standing," Shirley A. Radcliffe, 1961, 24pp.
4. "The Credit System," Lanonora G. Lewis, 1961, 37pp.

"New York-New Jersey to Coordinate External Degree Plans," School and Society, 100:293, Summer, 1972.

Office of Research and Evaluation Services, School of Education, City College, 135th St. and Convent Ave., New York, NY.

The Open Door Colleges, Carnegie Commission on Higher Education, New York: McGraw Hill, 1970.

Phi Delta Kappan, December, 1971.

"Pre-Accreditation for University Without Walls Program," Intellect, 101:213-14, January, 1973.

"Regents' External Degrees for 77," Intellect, 101:211-12, January, 1973.

Saturday Review, July 17, 1971.

"Standard Nine," Standards of the College Delegate Assembly of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. A publication of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, 795 Peachtree St., N.E., Atlanta, Georgia 30300.

U. S. News and World Report, October 4, 1971.

COMPARISON OF CREDITING VARIOUS NON-TRADITIONAL LEARNING ACTIVITIES
(2nd page of questionnaire)

This purpose of the second section of the questionnaire was to try and obtain some crediting practices at various schools for six different types of non-traditional learning activities. This section was complex and apparently scared a lot of respondents from completing it due to lack of time or information. Although the response was light in many cases, the results are given for comparison sakes. Most of the yes - no and specific number of credit type of responses have been graphed for hopefully easier comparison. The responses from the open ended questions have been selectively listed to give a range but at the same time a general "feel" for the type of general returns for each question.

The first two questions referred to policies regarding this area of higher education.

QUESTION II-A

Do you have a formalized policy of crediting various non-traditional learning activities?

Yes_____ No_____

RESULTS OF QUESTION II-A

See top of Graph #1.

QUESTION II-B

Do you give credit now at your school for various non-traditional learning activities?

Yes_____ No_____

RESULTS OF QUESTION II-B

See bottom of Graph #1.

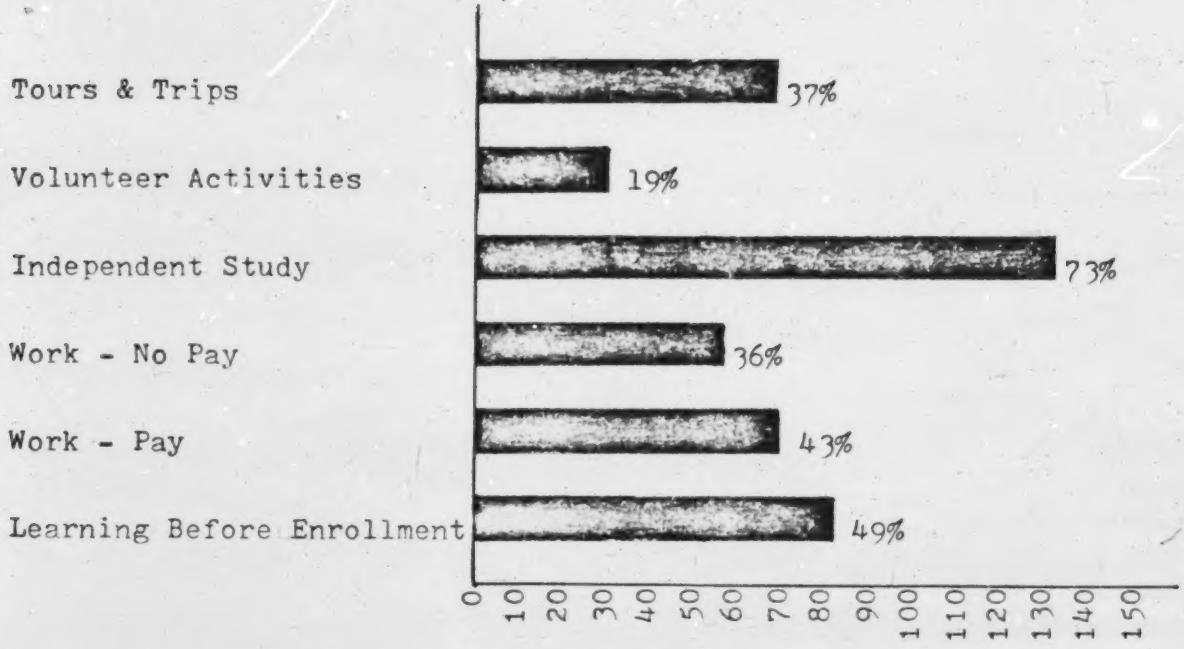
The number of responses to these first two questions was good, averaging 170-180 schools. The results show that although less than half the schools have formalized policies for crediting most of non-traditional learning activities, approximately 2/3 of them are giving credit for tours, working, and prior learning before enrollment. Practically all schools provide credits for some form of Independent Study.

Two questions were asked to try and compare the amount of credit various schools allow for certain learning activities. One related to the maximum credits given for each learning activity during any one enrollment period, while the other question asked for the maximum credits for each activity allowable towards a degree.

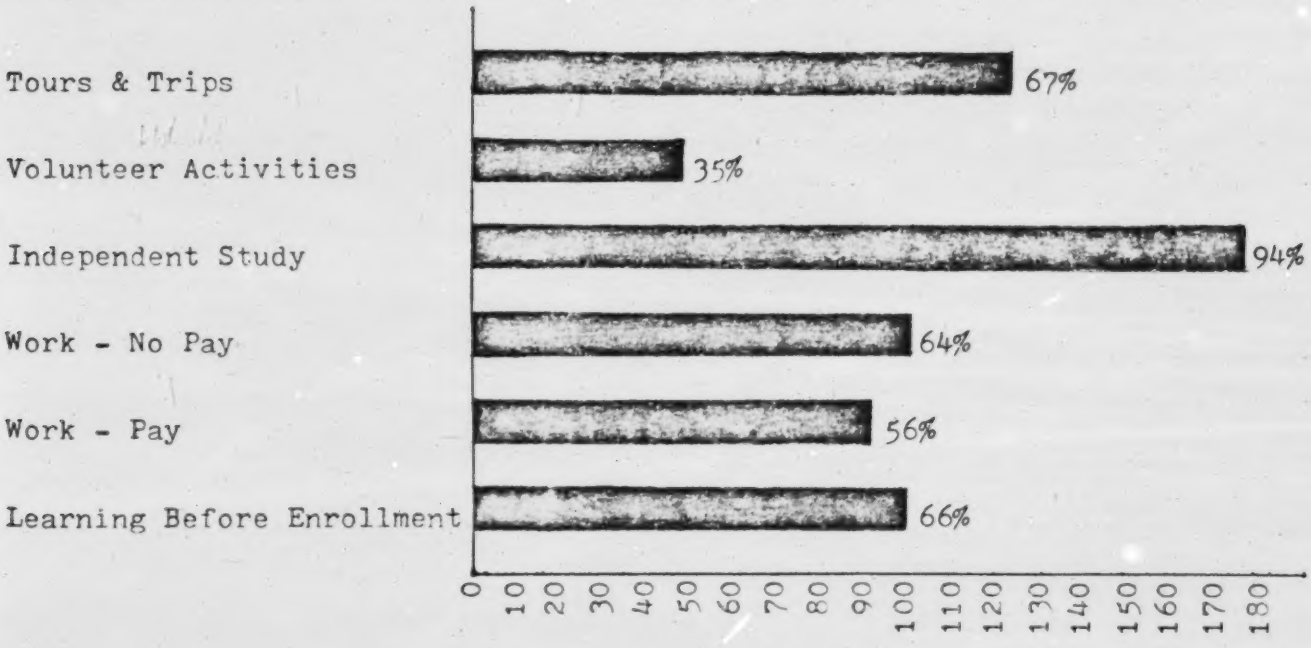
(Results of Question II-A & II-B)

Graph #1 Comparison of Crediting Various Non-Traditional Learning Activities

(NOTE: % Based on responses to specific questions)

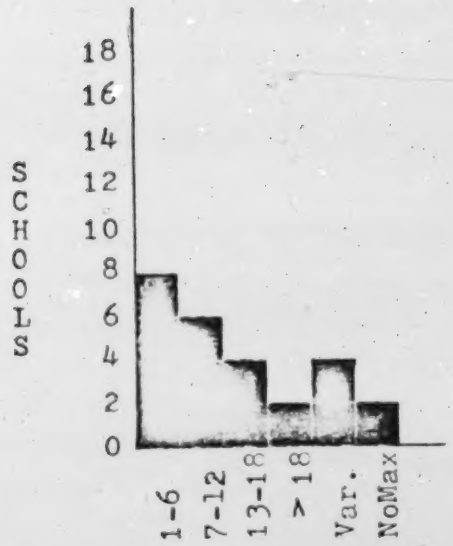


HAVE FORMALIZED POLICY

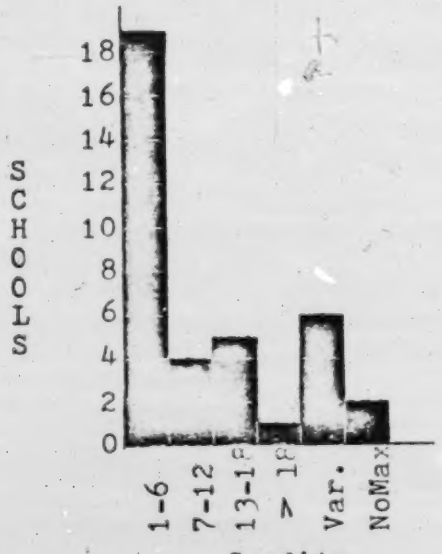


GIVE CREDIT FOR

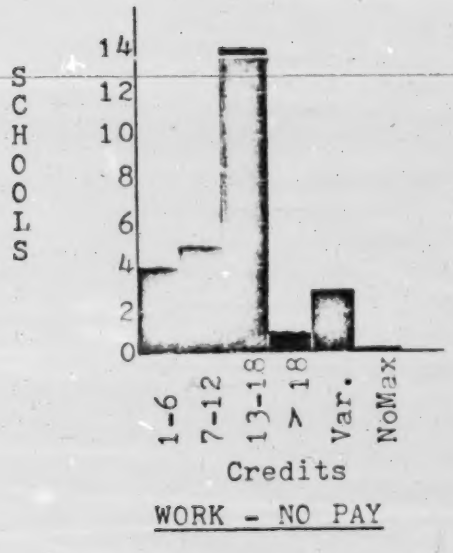
Graph #2 Maximum Credits Given During Any One Enrollment Period for Various Non-Traditional Activities - Quarter Schools



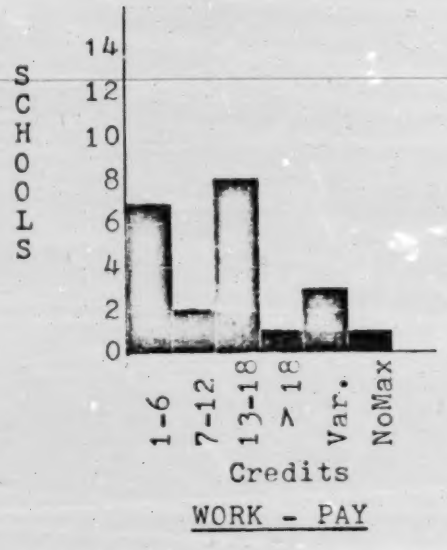
TOURS & TRIPS



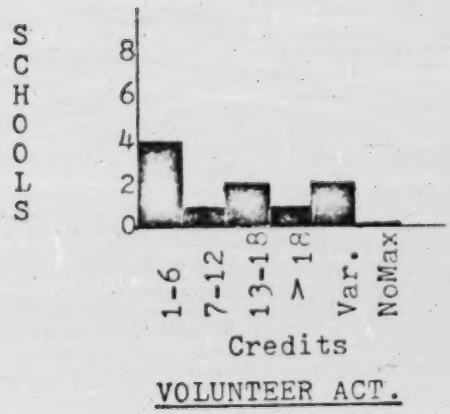
INDEPENDENT STUDY



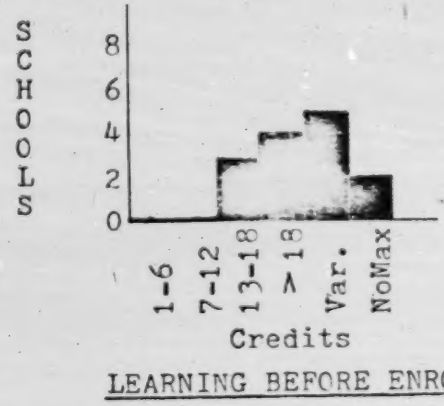
WORK - NO PAY



WORK - PAY

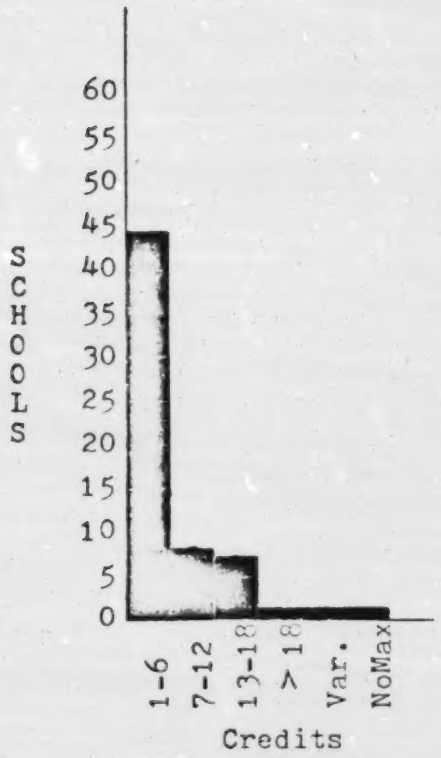


VOLUNTEER ACT.

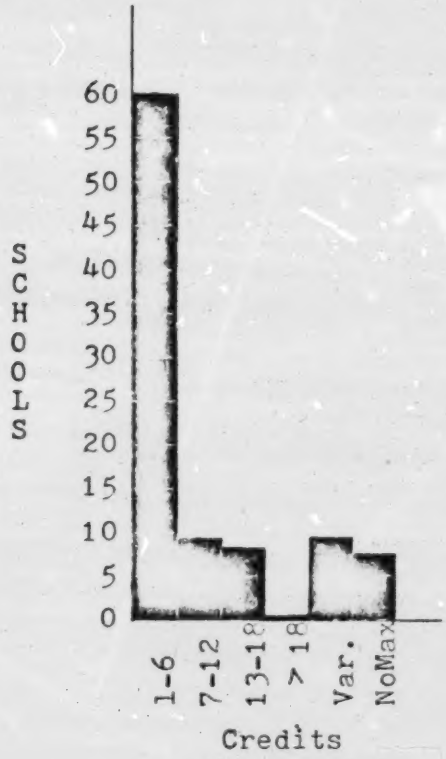


LEARNING BEFORE ENROLLMENT

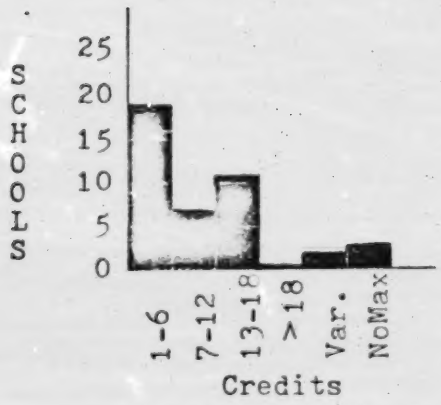
Graph # 3 Maximum Credits Given During Any One Enrollment Period for Various Non-Traditional Activities - Semester Schools



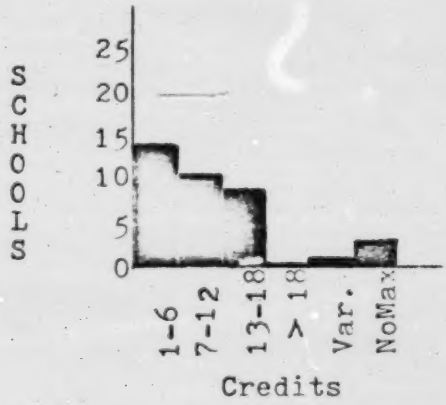
TOURS & TRIPS



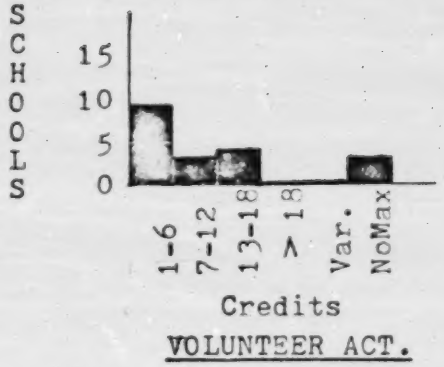
INDEPENDENT STUDY



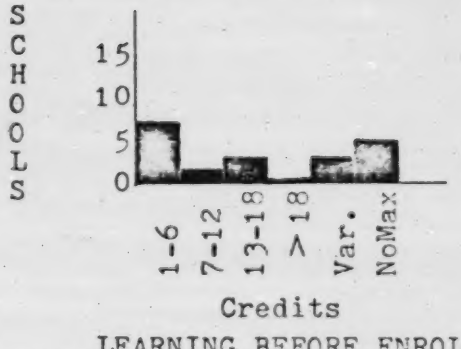
WORK - NO PAY



WORK - PAY



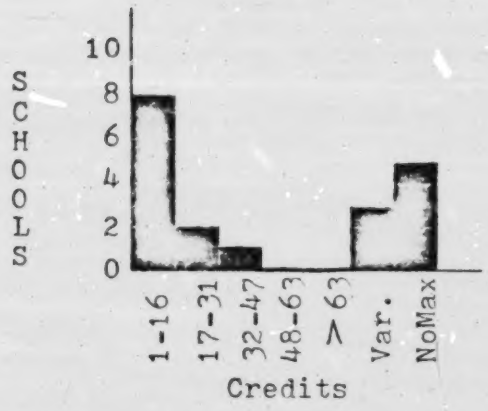
VOLUNTEER ACT.



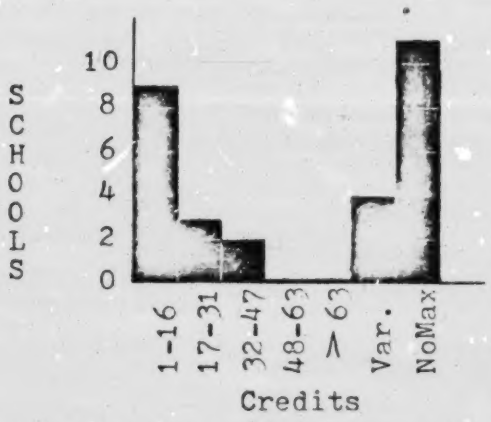
LEARNING BEFORE ENROLLMENT

(Results of Question II-D)

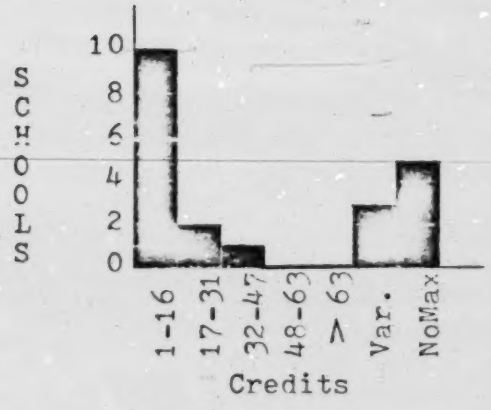
Graph # 4 Maximum Credits Allowable Towards Degree for Various Non-Traditional Activities - Quarter Schools



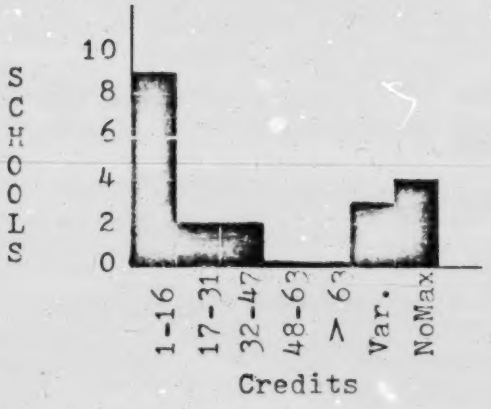
TOURS & TRIPS



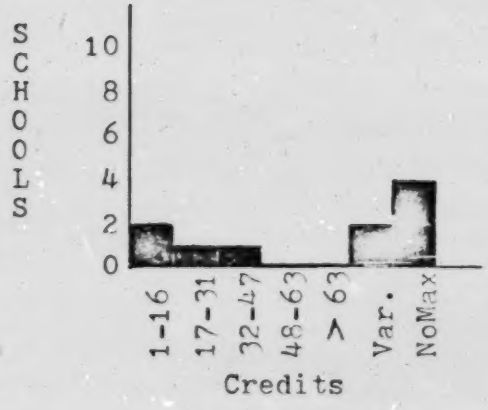
INDEPENDENT STUDY



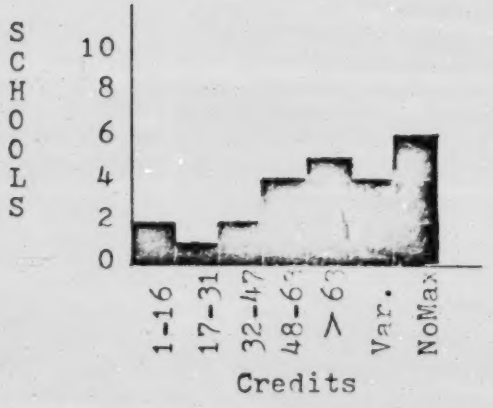
WORK - NO PAY



WORK - PAY



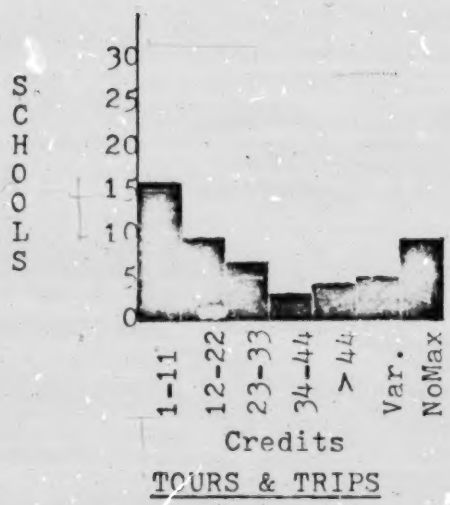
VOLUNTEER ACT.



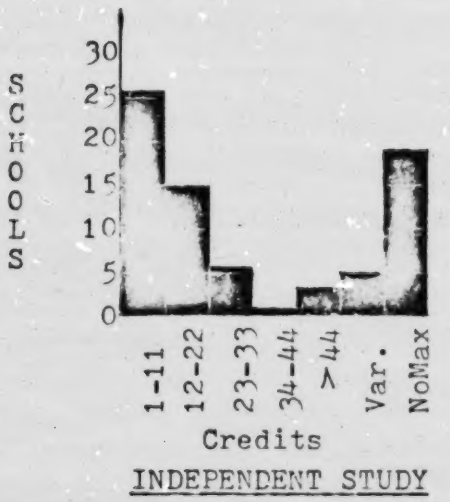
LEARNING BEFORE ENROLLMENT

(Results of Question II-D)

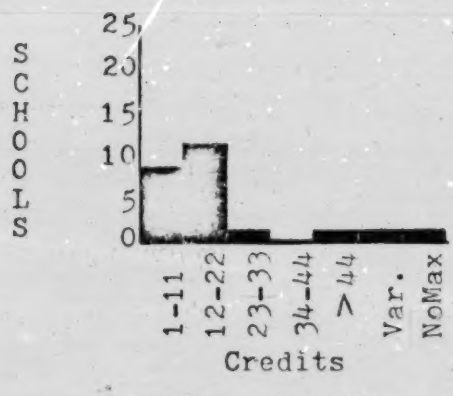
Graph # 5 Maximum Credits Allowable Towards Degree for Various Non-Traditional Activities - Semester Schools



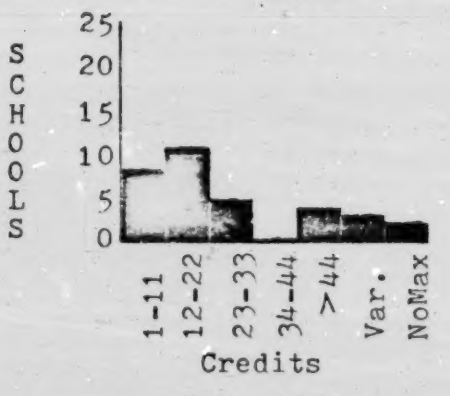
TOURS & TRIPS



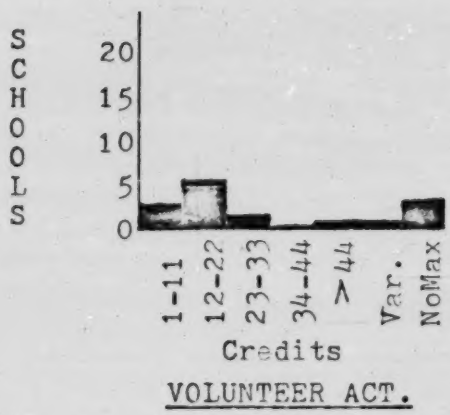
INDEPENDENT STUDY



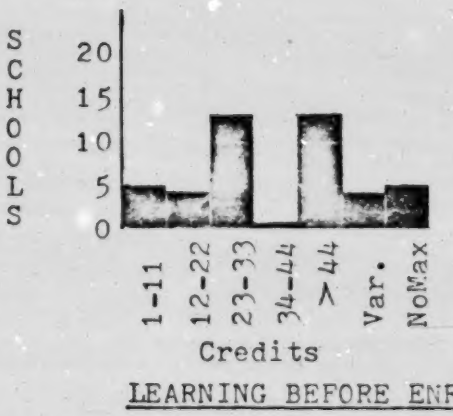
WORK - NO PAY



WORK - PAY



VOLUNTEER ACT.



LEARNING BEFORE ENROLLMENT

QUESTION II-C

Maximum amount of credit given during any one enrollment period for various learning activities.

RESULTS OF QUESTION II-C

See Graphs 2 and 3 for quarter and semester schools respectively.

QUESTION II-D

Maximum credits allowable toward a degree for various learning activities.

RESULTS OF QUESTION II-D

See Graphs 4 and 5 for quarter and semester schools respectively.

Individual response rate was low on these questions, but this is partially understandable since the answer may vary widely on the same campus between different degree programs. No attempt will be made to make any analysis from these sketchy results but they are provided for the reader to reflect upon and compare with.

Perhaps the most important questions of this section and perhaps of the questionnaire concerned the criteria used in determining credit worth of various learning activities and examples of various activities on each campus.

QUESTION II-E

List examples of various types of learning activities falling into the 6 classifications.

CONDENSED RESULTS OF QUESTION II-E

1. Tours or Trips - The answers relate to both time and type
   A. 39 respondents described summer programs
   B. 30 related to course trips
   C. 29 listed study abroad programs
   D. 10 were held during the "Interim" period between semesters (no quarter schools involved)

2. Volunteer Activities - tutoring, inner city projects, Division of Corrections Volunteer Work, ACTION and VISTA, counseling advising at Youth Center Community Involvement-all ages, etc.

3. Independent Study Projects - (a few schools use the words independent study to designate only correspondence type courses) Honors program, instructor guided research, special problems course, regular courses, reading, reports, student initiated experience, etc.

4. Work Experience - No Pay
   A. 35 respondents listed Internships - no pay
   B. various other areas were - field work in public administration, practicums, student teaching, field experience, etc.

5. Work Experience - Pay
   A. 39 respondents listed paid Internships
   B. 27 described formal Co-op programs
   C. some others listed included - apprenticeships, summer work, action programs. (where volunteers are paid), etc.

6. Learning Obtained Before Enrollment
   CLEP tests, specific departmental subject exams, military schooling and experiences, advance placement tests, CEEB, Peace Corp or VISTA, work or life experience, ACE, SAT, GTS, etc.

7. Other - many workshops were listed, several External degree programs, several degrees without major, contract courses, correspondence courses and programs, etc.

QUESTION II-F

Describe the criteria you employ to equate the educational worth in credits for various non-traditional learning activities.

RESULTS OF QUESTION II-F

A partial listing of responses to that question will follow. As with all such condensations in this report, they are an attempt to present an unbiased representative view of all responses. They are as follows:

1. Tours or Trips -
   A. 18 listed time spent with one response being as specific as 40 hours class time = 1 semester hour.
   B. 17 responses related to the criteria being the same or part of existing courses.
   C. 10 listed departmental evaluation
   D. 9 mentioned oral or written reports
   E. 8 described either a teacher or administrator making judgements
   F. 3 referred to various on-campus committes as deciding
   G. plus such typical responses as -usual criteria, Carnegie, eyeball and common sense, not standardized, etc.

2. Volunteer Activities
   A. 6 related to the individual departments approving and evaluating
   B. several listed the judgement of individual faculty members and/or agency supervisors as criteria.
   C. time spent was again listed by several with one specific example: 3 days/week for quarter = 3 quarters hour credit.
   D. written reports also were given by a couple schools

3. Independent Study Projects
   A. 27 respondents listed as criteria the decision of the related department
   B. 23 mentioned that the instructor made the major decisions
   C. several schools implied that only superior or honor students were allowed to participate.
   D. the most interesting and comparable area again dealt with time spent;among specific answers in this category were: 3 hours/week = 1 sem. credit, 2 hours/week = 1 sem. credit, 1 clock hour/week for 18 weeks = 1 sem. credit, 1 week of full time activity = 1 sem. credit, 10 hours total spent on activity = 1 quarter credit.
   E. Another area of criteria by several schools was a comparison with regular courses as to intensity and credit hours.
   F. The student was involved by some schools in developing a contract which was then fulfilled by papers and/or exams.

4. Work Experience - No Pay
   A. 10 schools referred to time spent as the major criteria for credit. Some specific examples given were: 3 hours/week for semester = 1 sem. credit, 30 hours total spent = 1 sem. credit, 3 hours/week for quarter = 1 quarter credit. One school has the rule "He that gets credit shall not get pay and visa-versa."
   B. 8 schools listed the department sponsoring credit as setting the criteria.
   C. 8 others mentioned a faculty member as determining credit amount.
   D. 7 referred to the Field Supervisor of the agency for which the student worked as playing the major role in deciding criteria and evaluation.
   E. 5 again inferred that a report or exam was used
   F. several used a contract form and has students set predetermined learning objectives, while others had elaborate guidelines, and still others compared directly to other courses.

5. Work Experience - Pay
   A. 9 respondents again used time as the major criteria. Some specific examples were: 4 hours work/week over semester = 1 sem. credit, 200 hours total work = 1 sem. credit, full time approved work for pay (or volunteer) over a quarter = 12 quarter credits.
   B. 9 listed the sponsoring department as determining criteria.
   C. 7 listed a faculty mamber or administrator
   D. 6 reported the work supervisor to be directly involved.
   E. 4 used reports of various types as the determining factor for credits.
   F. A variety of others were listed such as exams, predetermined objectives, journeyman status, etc.

6. Learning Obtained Before Enrollment
   A. 45 colleges listed the CLEP tests as their existing criteria.
   B. 31 are using specific departmental exams
   C. 22 mentioned giving credit for military schooling, if relevant.
   D. 17 use the advanced placement exams
   E. also listed were the N.Y. College Prof. exams by boards of related faculty, plus several said they were in the act of modifying and liberalizing existing policies in this area.

To say the least, some of the answers are difficult if not impossible to compare. They certainly do not easily lead to the development of clear cut criteria. Time spent on an activity probably is mentioned the most. However, it is obvious that there are vast differences in the application of this criteria. This brings back the problem pointed out earlier, that even the so-called traditional classroom learning activities vary greatly between schools when it comes to crediting on a time basis as seen by Question I-C and I-D.

TRENDS AND PHILOSOPHY
(3rd page of questionnaire)

The purpose of the last section and page of the questionnaire was an attempt to hopefully obtain some reading on the "feelings and mood" on various campuses towards crediting non-traditional learning activities. Also, to see if there was any observable trends towards increasing or decreasing this area of higher education. Besides a yes-no response on several questions, a comments section was provided. A staggering 30 pages of condensed comments was the result of the three questions asked in this section. These comments are interesting and informative but of necessity had to be further condensed and divided into sub-divisions.

QUESTION III-A

Are you planning any changes in crediting non-traditional learning activities in the next 2-3 year period?

Yes_____No_____

RESULTS OF QUESTION III-A

Total Responses = 172
Yes = 110 responses or 64%
No = 62 responses or 36%

CONDENSED COMMENTS TO III-A

Four major areas seemed to be frequently mentioned in comments of planning for the next 2-3 year period. Twenty two comments mentioned that this area of crediting for non-traditional learning activities was currently being discussed, studied, or researched on their campus. Fifteen listed co-op programs, internships and externships and past and present work experience for credit as specific areas of potential expansion and initiation. Thirteen schools plan to begin using CLEP and other standarized exams for credit in the near future. Ten others described new External or special type degrees which will be implimented in the next couple of years.

Other areas mentioned by at least five different schools were: expanding or reorganizing their Division of Continuing Education, currently developing specific policies and procedures to handle this area of crediting, or developing or enlarging Independent study opportunities.

Many of those responding negatively to the question, did comment that they already were academically very flexible and planned only to continue using these liberal guidelines already established.

A few typical comments:

"We are constantly grappling with the question of crediting non-traditional learning activities."

"Expanding and enhancing to include more recognizable competencies which could and should be credited toward degree requirements."
"We are moving slowly, evaluating each individual experiment and justifying credit by comparison of competency acquired with traditional methods."
"Expansion of maximum credit by exam policy to 92 semester hours."
"Extra-curricular activities may be approved for credit beginning Sept. 73 by all Academic Depts. based on objectives, criteria, and eval. procedures formally determined by a dept. and student prior to the semester in which the activity is to take place."

The second question of this section related to what groups if any are showing interest in this area of crediting.

QUESTION III-B

Are you getting any pressure or interest from students or faculty to institute changes in crediting non-traditional learning activities in you institution?

Yes_____ No_____

Comments:

RESULTS OF QUESTION III-B

Total Responses - 208
Yes = 128 responses or 62%
No = 80 responses or 38%

CONDENSED COMMENTS TO III-B

One point mentioned by many was that they did not consider the word pressure appropriate but rather interest and discussion as coming from various sources related to the crediting of non-traditional learning activities. There was no question in that the consensus of the comments attributed the major source of interest in this subject coming from students attempting to liberalize existing policies. However, a close second to this group was that of the more conservative faculty members who were showing increasing interest in reducing the amount of flexibility already developed on some campuses.

Some of the other groups mentioned by several schools as expressing increasing interest and requests for changes in this area were: veterans, educational administrators, counseling staff, minorities, older people, business and industry, RN's, vocational school transfers, and State Legislatures.

A few interesting comments about how "pressure" is created:

> "No plans, although we will certainly have to look carefully at a new kind of transfer applicant who may appear - a student from a UWW school."
> "It would appear likely that, as work of the Board of Governors Program filters down to students in traditional programs, agitation for more credits for more non-traditional areas will grow."

A few typical comments about the dilemma facing many administrators:

> "Students want more with less ties to academic study. Some faculty agree but others are now thinking we have gone too far already."
> "Many faculty wish no change; students desire change."
> "Many students requests; much faculty resistance."
> "We have a full spectrum of faculty attitudes concerning it."
> "It is becoming more popular with students, less with faculty."
> "Both ways - to restrict options and to open options."

The last question or comment area of this section and the questionnaire was a deliberate attempt to solicit philosophical comments regarding this area of crediting.

QUESTION III-C

Any other comments you feel appropriate regarding this area of higher education (use reverse side if needed).

A few comments received from this question are listed next. These were selected to provoke thought in some cases but also to present some philosophical positions in others.

> "We should be doing much more in this area-Evaluation techniques which we do not have must be developed!"
> "It should be approached very cautiously. We prefer the credit by exam approach."
> "I'm afraid Behavioral Objectives are the only answer."
> "We seem to have long neglected a valuable resource in education if we look at the laboratories and enviornments of business and industry available."
> "We feel that credit for experiences which occurred outside of University supervision should receive credit only if validated by an appropriate exam."
> "Non-traditional degrees have been overpublicized in the press prior to establishment of valid programs.... Now we have two options: (1) Hand out pieces of paper (degrees) to everyone until their value reaches the level of mere pieces of paper. (2) Establish

sound criteria which are measurable and meaningful at several levels. (ie. technical skills, cognitive constructs or rationales, and affective relationships to specific objectives)"

"The Carnegie unit of measurement should be the one Yardstick appropriate for measurement in unusual programs."

"The Carnegie unit says that a student owes a course 45 hours of in-class experience and outside work and preparation for one semester of credit. The number of class meeting/week is not the basis for defining credit."

"Although I think we need to do more in this area, I think the principle areas are in non-academic experiences and can best be served by the high schools, technical institutes, two year centers or community colleges, etc. I doubt there is a tremendous market for academic degree programs which stress heavily the type of education."

"We feel it is a coming Tide and will keep our student enrollment from slumping too much."

"In short all criteria are really subjective and based on individual judgments or in some cases concensus. Regardless of what mechanism covers the process, I seriously doubt any satisfactory criteria will exist until there are some agreed upon goals of higher education that can be operationalized or at least identified by some broadly defined behavior. In the meantime judgments will continue to be arbitrary and strained."

III. CONCLUSIONS, COMMENTS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

1. There are wide variances between the amount of credit given for "traditional" course offerings let alone non-traditional ones.

2. Very little has been developed by accrediting agencies as to specific guidelines for crediting non-traditional learning activities. However, work has begun.

3. Within the past couple years, there has been a dramatic increase in the number of articles, brochures, and even books relating to non-traditional learning activities.

4. The majority of schools contacted do not have a formalized policy regarding the crediting of most non-traditional learning activities. Independent Study, which is available at nearly all schools in some form, is the exception.

5. The majority of schools contacted do award credits for most non-traditional learning activities. The exception, Volunteer Activities, is given credit at only approximately 1/3 of the schools.

6. Non-paid Internships were the most frequently mentioned work experience no-pay type of activity receiving credit.

7. Paid internships and formal co-op programs were the most frequently mentioned work experience -- pay type of activity receiving credit.

8. CLEP type tests were the most frequently mentioned as the instrument used in evaluating learning obtained before enrollment.

9. The sponsoring department, the evaluating instructor, and time spent were the most frequently mentioned criteria contacted schools used in crediting various activities.

10. The majority of schools contacted are experiencing interest, and in a few cases pressure, to institute changes in crediting non-traditional learning act. Sometimes the interest or pressure from various sources is diametrically opposed on the same campus.

11. The majority of the schools contacted do plan to initiate further changes in crediting non-traditional learning activities on their campus in the next 2-3 year period.

12. New co-op and internship programs, greater use of CLEP tests, and new flexible degree programs were the most frequently mentioned intended changes.

Comments

One of the first major problems one encounters with crediting non-traditional methods to learning is when you attempt to utilize the same credit measuring techniques previously used with traditional lecture - lab classroom activities. We begin to discover that formulas like the "Carnegie" system put major emphasis on time exposed to a certain teaching-learning method. Learning outcomes has practically nothing to do with the credits obtained. So we have credits = degree = time spent exposed to certain educational methodologies.

When we leave the campus and use the "real world" as a learning enviornment with less controls we get into real troubles trying to employ techniques which rely on time spent = credits obtained. Admittedly it may appear to be easier but as so many apparent easy solutions to complex problems - they don't really solve anything but create more and additional problems. Somehow educational outcomes such as behavior changes learning objectives, compentencies, etc. must begin to be used in equating credits awarded.

Before we pursue that point, several respondents and schools seem to think they can ignore this entire messy problem by giving "new" type credits for non-traditional learning. Not only is this a hopeless road to traverse in developing a new type credit everytime a new learning method is employed but again this is no solution. Take the new CEU (Continuing Education Unit). Although just recently established by many schools to identify and record various "non-credit" offerings of various schools, the interest and pressure to convert these "CEU's" into useable credits towards degree requirements is already beginning in several schools contacted. If someone told you that you were getting paid in dollars and also PYZ's, it wouldn't be very long before you would be asking how much is a PYZ worth in dollars and cents toward purchasing a desired item. To think students, especially older ones, will act differently is folly. Pressure for creating a conversion system back to useable credits to receive a degree is inevitable. Therefore these "new" credits will have ultimately solved no problems but created many additional ones.

The task before us it would seem is to convert learning outcomes into useable credits regardless of the educational method used to achieve them. It would seem that the wide and growing popularity of the CLEP tests is indicating that this approach may be one small step in the right direction. Certainly other common evaluation and at least partially objectives tools such as written reports, oral presentations, etc. can and should be employed. Of course, some respondents have and will continue to say that only subjective methods can explore and evaluate true learning. However, when a Dean personally tells me, as one recently did, that his school will allow over 90 semester credit hours for "life" experiences and upon questioning he informs me they use no testing program other than that a small committee occasionally meets and reviews a persons letters of prior work experience and recommendation, I shudder. If the road to hell is paved with good intentions as they say, I'm afraid some institutions are merrily skipping down that path.

A couple other frightening prospects are the several schools who indicated they were expanding their non-traditional crediting policy because they hoped to attract new students to offset enrollment slumps. I'm afraid this has all the ear marks of a retail price war. Many customer's do begin shopping around and comparing prices when these begin, but in order to survive in this competitive jungle those competing schools will have to continually "up their ante" and award more and more credits for less and less.

The road to develop comparable, objective criteria for learning achieved is not an easy path. There are no panceasbut alot of pitfalls and pandora boxes along the way. Since a credit is a small part of a degree, one major problem to be answered by any institution initially is- What exactly does a degree signify from our institution? Even this has some frightening implications since a truly compentency based program would mean practically no senior should receive a degree until after they "proved" themselves by several years of real experience. Visa-versa any person who had "proved" himself (by salary, level of responsibility, etc.) in that career area should be automatically mailed a degree upon request. Kind of scary in the implications.

In summary, non-traditional learning activities for credit are an increasing segment of higher education. How fast and how far will vary greatly from school to school and even among different programs on the same campus depending upon the mission and educational objectives of the various units. It would seem that they should be added into the total educational program of an institution to meet specific functional educational outcomes and not added as extra "flashy chrome" to primarily enhance the looks of certain programs or schools. Their logical addition to well managed institutions are going to improve those institutions but the hap hazard jumping on the band wagon style of crediting some of these activities could prove disasterous to all concerned - student, school, and society. The next couple years are going to be groping and grasping ones for persons charged with the responsibility to maintain "quality" and also simultaneously open up the options. Perhaps a few of the following recommendations could help during this transitional period.

Recommendations

1. Having accrediting agencies assume more of a role in disseminating information regarding current acceptable an/or undesirable crediting practice for non-traditional learning activities.

2. Get professional societies relating either to methodology areas or discipline areas to actively initiate research and proposals for crediting. An example, of a combination of the above is that of the American Society of Engineering Education and the Cooperative Education Association forming a task force to investigate and develop guidelines for crediting cooperative education work programs at the College level.

3. Have regional or national workshop - conferences on this subject of accrediting non-traditional learning activities. These could be sponsored by the U.S. Office of Education or other agencies, societies, or foundation group. (A Conference which might be of interest was mentioned by a couple schools, entitled "State of the Art" to be held on October 26 & 27, 1973 at the Kellogg Center, Michigan State University and sponsored by the Society for Field Experience.)

4. Develop a clearinghouse at some location for persons to write for the latest materials available on this subject area. Perhaps related to the above would be the periodical publication of a one page newsletter describing new research, articles, and practices in this growing area. (Some movement has already begun in this area with the-establishment of a Cooperative Ed. Information Clearinghouse at Northeastern University in Boston; the publication of Center for Washington D.C., Learning Opportunities Bulletin, with emphasis on internship opportunities published quarterly;etc.)

5. Each College or University should perhaps establish a specific task force to review current campus crediting practices and establish University or school wide policies and guidelines for crediting any learning activity.

APPENDIX

Sample of Questionnaires
Sample of letter
List of schools Responding
Graphs 6,7,8,&9
List of Books and Articles used

QUESTIONNAIRE ON AWARDING ACADEMIC CREDIT

FOR NON-TRADITIONAL LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Note: All questions relating to credits refer to credits useful in meeting degree requirements, not to "added on" type credits. If your institution only awards "added on" credits for these activities, please specify as such.

I. General Background Information

A. Approximate total credits necessary to obtain a Bachelor's Degree from your institution:

_____ credits

B. Type of calendar your institution is on:

_____ Quarters
_____ Semesters

If other, please specify _____

C. For a traditional lecture type class say in History, meeting for one hour lecture periods, 3 days a week, over an entire enrollment period (quarter or semester) - how many credits would you normally allow?

_____ credits

D. During the summer or other times, if you offer a special concentrated course say in English, meeting for a two week period, 6 to 8 hours each day, 5 days a week - how many credits would you normally give?

_____ credits

E. Have you ever received any information from accrediting agencies as to their opinions or reactions regarding awarding credits toward graduation for non-traditional learning activities? Yes ____ No ____
If yes, please list their reaction or send a copy of their policy regarding such.

F. If you know of any books or articles relating to the subject of crediting non-traditional learning activities, it would be sincerely appreciated if you could list them.

Please complete the following table.

II. Comparison of Crediting Various Non-Traditional Learning Activities at Your School

Non-Traditional learning activities	Formalized policy (if yes please send copy)		Any credit given now at your school		Example of activity*	Criteria used in determining credit worth	Maximum amount of credit given during any one enrollment period	Maximum credits allowable toward degree. If it varies, give extremes.
	Yes	No	Yes	No				
1. Tours or trips								
2. Volunteer activities								
3. Independent study projects								
4. Work experience for no pay								
5. Work experience for pay								
6. Learning obtained before enrollment from Peace Corp, work exp., etc.								
7. Other								

*Note: Please send samples - if only a clipped course description from your catalog

III. Trends and Philosophy

A. Are you planning any changes in crediting non-traditional learning activities in the next 2-3 year period?

Yes ____ No ____

Comments:

B. Are you getting any pressure or interest from students or faculty to institute changes in crediting non-traditional learning activities in your institution?

Yes ____ No ____

Comments:

C. Any other comments you feel appropriate regarding this area of higher education (use reverse side if needed).

Final Note: I am enclosing both a self-addressed envelope for this form's return and also a mailing label for any materials which you feel could help provide additional information about this subject.

Person Completing Form _____

Title _____

Institution _____

Address _____

_____

If you desire to receive a summary copy of the results of this study, please check here _____ yes, mail me results.

Thank you again for your cooperation.

Please return form by March 1, 1973

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-STOUT
MENOMONIE, WISCONSIN
54751

Jan. 25, 1973

Dear Sir:

The purpose of this letter is to ask your assistance in helping us solve an evolving educational problem - that of proper crediting non-traditional learning experiences. I am sure you are aware of the growing interest in awarding credit for such things as overseas trips and tours, volunteer work, independent study projects, work experience, etc. The question we have, and from preliminary feedback seems to be widespread, is "what criteria should be used in awarding credits toward graduation for such learning activities."

Accrediting agencies seemingly offer no specific answers. Trying to apply the old Carnegie system of awarding credit based on scheduled class hours of lecture or lab/week becomes difficult if not impossible and inappropriate.

I have included a short survey form for you or your staff to hopefully complete. From the results of such a study I hope to publish in late spring a summary of the current "state of the art" of awarding credits for non-traditional learning activities. A copy of this non statistical summary report will be sent you if you will please check an appropriate box on the enclosed questionnaire. This project is being funded by the State of Wisconsin as an Institution research topic in the hope that we can resolve a growing problem.

Thank you for your time in helping us, and perhaps yourself, obtain some factual information in a growing academic area of higher education.

Sincerely,

J. A. Ganzemiller, Director
Field Experience and
Independent Study

JAG/pas

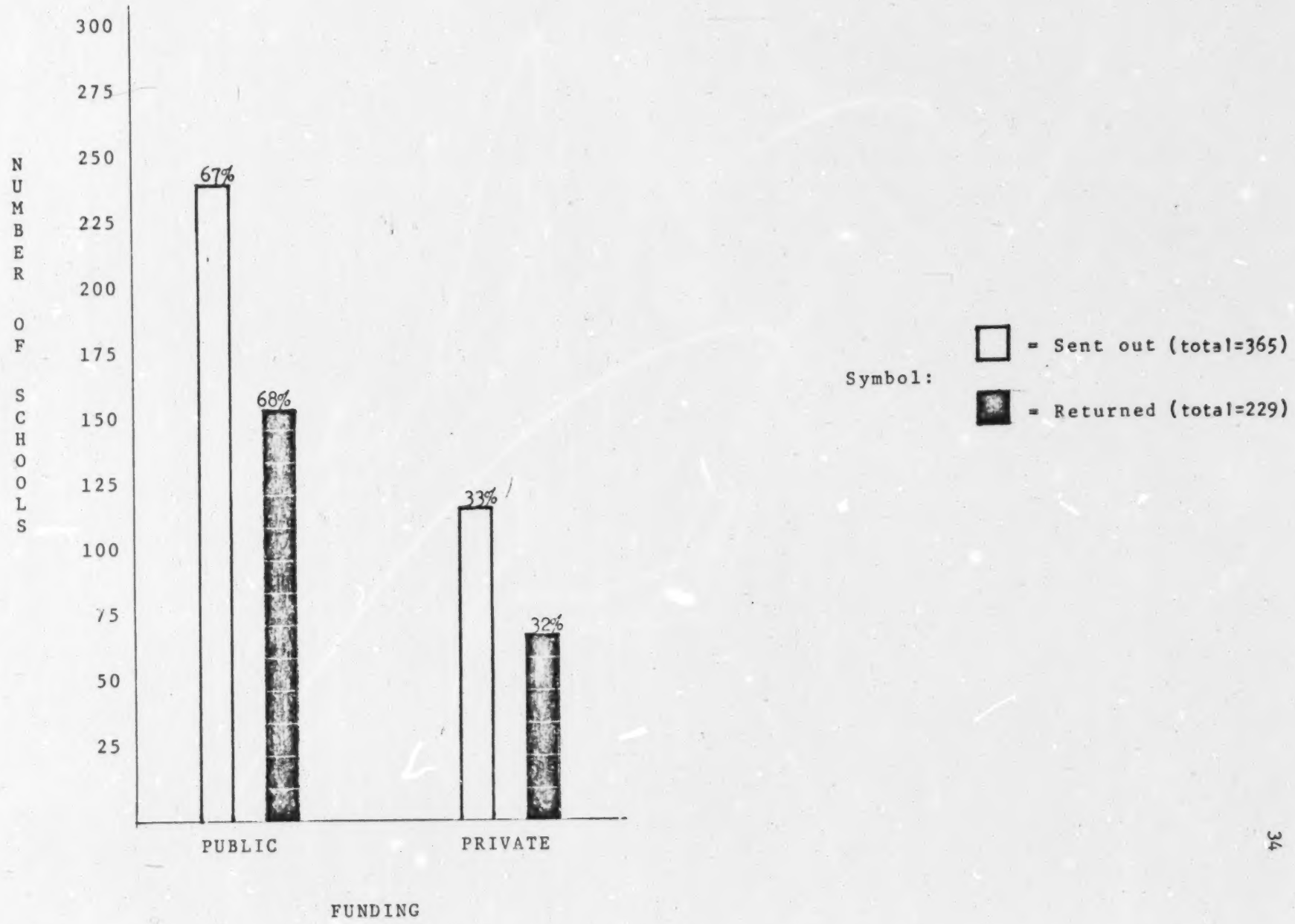
ENC.

SCHOOLS THAT RESPONDED

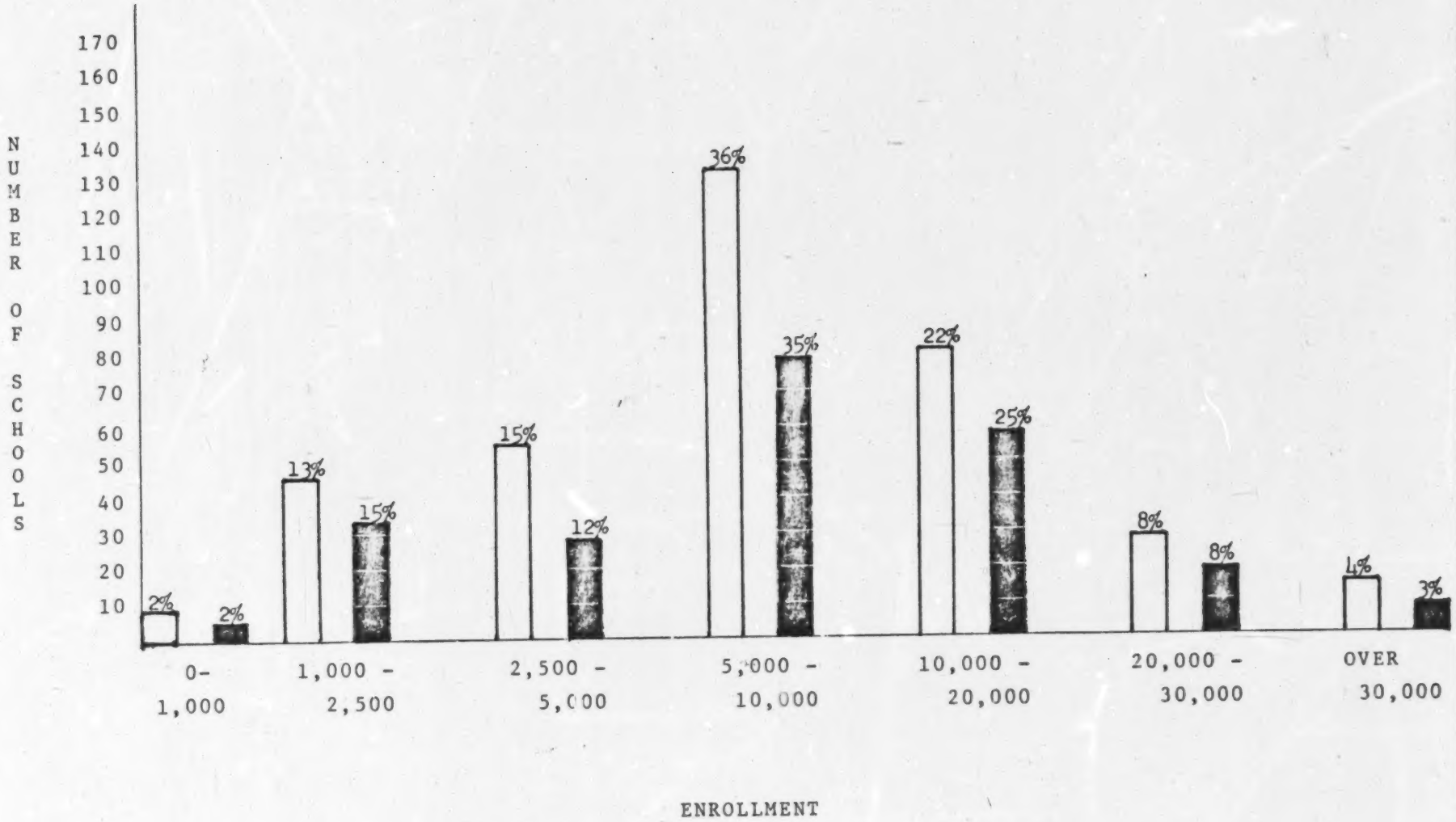
Adelphi Univ.
Alabama A & M
American Univ.
Antioch College
Arizona St. Univ.
Arkansas Polytech. College
Arkansa St. Univ.
Auburn Univ.
Augsburg College
Azusa Pacific College
Ball St. Univ.
Beloit College
Berea College
Black Hills St. College
Bloomsburg St. College
Boise St. College
Boston Univ.
Bradley Univ.
Brown Univ.
Butler Univ.
Calif. Luthrn. College
Calif. St. Polytech. College
Calif. St. Polytech. Univ.
Calif. St. Univ.-Fresno
Calif. St. Univ.-Hayward
Calif. St. Univ.-Long Beach
Calif. St. Univ.-San Francisco
Calif. State Univ.-Sonoma
Carnegie-Mellon Univ.
Carroll College
Central Connecticut St. College
Central Missouri St. College
Central St. College
Central Washington St. College
Chapman College
City College-NY
Clemson Univ.
Cleveland St. Univ.
Coe College
Colorado St. Univ.
Defiance College
Depaul Univ.
Drake Univ.
Drexel Inst. of Tech.
Duke Univ.
E. Tennessee St. Univ.
E. Texas St. Univ.
Eastern Kentucky Univ.
Eastern Michigan Univ.
Eastern New Mexico Univ.
Eastern Washington St. Col.
Emory University
Fairleigh Dickinson Univ.
Ferris St. College
Fitchburg St. College
Florida St. Univ.
Fordham Univ.
Framingham St. College
Francis T. Nicholls St. College
Georgia Inst. of Tech.
Georgia St. College
Glassboro St. College
Hampton Institute
Harris Teachers College
Harvard Univ. & Radcliffe College
Henderson St. College
Idaho St. Univ.
Illinois Inst. of Tech.
Indiana St. University
Indiana University
Iowa St. Univ.
Jacksonville St. Univ.
John Hopkins Univ.
Kansas St. Teachers College
Kansas St. Univ.
Keene St. College
Kent St. University
Kentucky St. College
Lindenwood College
Louisiana St. Univ.
Lowel Tech. Inst.
Loyola University
Luther College
Macalester College
Marshall Univ.
Marygrove College
Massachusetts Inst. of Tech.
Miami University
Michigan St. Univ.
Michigan Tech. Univ.
Middle Tennessee St. Univ.
Millikin Univ.
Minot St. College
Mississippi Valley St. College
Missouri Southern College
Montana St. University
Montclair St. College
Morningside College
Mount Mary College
Murrary St. Univ.
New College
Newark College of Engineering
Newark St. College
North Dakota St. Univ.
North Texas St. Univ.
Northeast Louisiana Univ.
Northeast Missouri St. Univ.
Northeastern Illinois St. College
Northeastern University
Northern Illinois University
Northern Michigan Univ.
Northern St. College

Northwest Missouri St. Univ.
Northwestern Univ.
Ohio Northern Univ.
Ohio University
Oklahoma St. Univ.
Old Dominion Univ.
Oregon St. Univ.
Ouachita Baptist Univ.
Wm. Paterson St. College
Pennsylvania St. Univ.
Plymouth St. College
Princeton Univ.
Purdue University
Queens College
Randolph-Macon College
Reed College
Rhode Island School of Design
Rider College
Ripon Collete
Rochester Inst. of Tech.
Saint Cloud St. College
Saint Louis Univ.
Saint Olaf College
San Diego St. College
Seattle Univ.
Shippensburg St. College
Slippery Rock St. College
South Dakota St. University
Southeastern Louisiana Univ.
Southeastern Massachusetts Univ.
Southern Colorado St. College
Southern Connecticut St. College
Southern Illinois Univ.
Southern St. College
Southwest Missouri St. Univ.
Stanford Univ.
State Univ. of New York
Stephen F. Austin St. College
Stephen College
Tennessee Tech. Univ.
Towson St. College
Trenton St. College
Tufts University
Tuskegee Inst.
Univ. of Alabama
Univ. of Alaska
Univ. of Arizona
Univ. of Arkansas
Univ. of Bridgeport
Univ. of Calif.-Davis
Univ. of Calif.-Los Angeles
Univ. of Chicago
Univ. of Connecticut
Univ. of Delaware
Univ. of Denver
Univ. of Evansville
Univ. of Georgia
Univ. of Hartford
Univ. of Hawaii
Univ. of Houston
Univ. of Iowa
Univ. of Kansas
Univ. of Kentucky
Univ. of Miami
Univ. of Michigan
Univ. of Minnesota-Duluth
Univ. of Minnesota-Minneapolis
Univ. of Mississippi
Univ. of Missouri-Columbia
Univ. of Missouri-Kansas City
Univ. of Missouri-St. Louis
Univ. of Montana
Univ. of Nebraska-Lincoln
Univ. of Nebraska-Omaha
Univ. of Nevada
Univ. of New Hamshire
Univ. of New Mexico
Univ. of North Dakota
Univ. of Northern Colorado
Univ. of Northern Iowa
Univ. of Oregon
Univ. of Rhode Island
Univ. of South Alabama
Univ. of South Dakota
Univ. of South Florida
Univ. of Tennessee
Univ. of Texas
Univ. of Toledo
Univ. of Tulsa
Univ. of Utah
Univ. of Virginia
Univ. of Washington
Univ. of Wisconsin-Green Bay
Univ. of Wisconsin-LaCrosse
Univ. of Wisconsin-Milwaukee
Univ. of Wisconsin-Oshkosh
Univ. of Wisconsin-River Falls
Univ. of Wisconsin-Stevens Point
Univ. of Wisconsin-Superior
Univ. of Wisconsin-Whitewater
Utah St. University
Valdosta St. College
Valparaiso Univ.
Vassar College
Virginia Polytech. Inst.
Washington St. Univ.
Washington Univ.
West Chester St. College
West Texas St. Univ.
West Virginia Univ.
Western Illinois Univ.
Western Michigan Univ.
Whittier College
Wilberforce Univ.
Wittenberg Univ.
Yale College

Graph # 6 The Funding Characteristics of Schools Contacted & Those Answering Questionaire



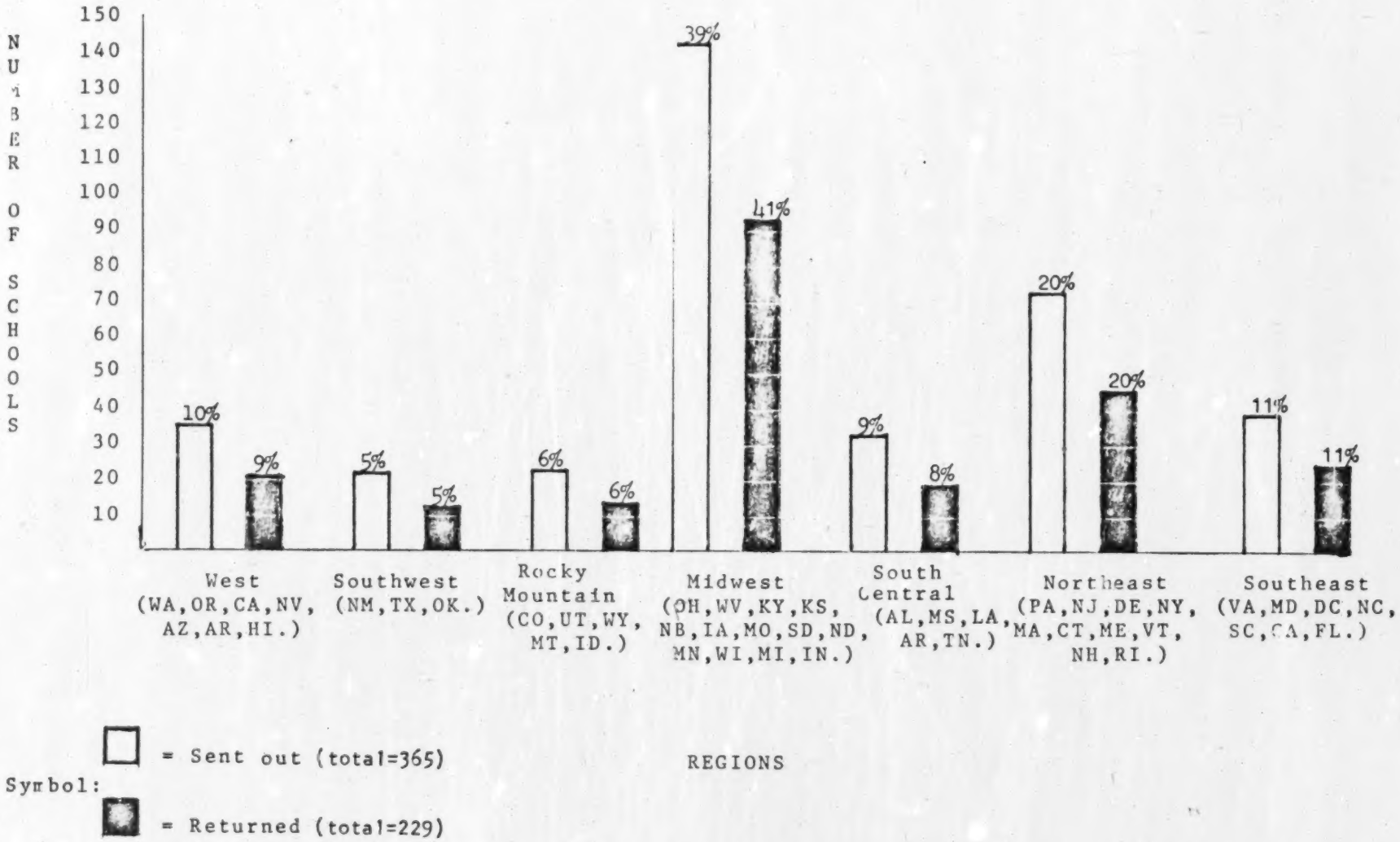
Graph #7 The Enrollment Size of Schools Contacted and Those Answering Questionaire



Symbol: □ = Sent out (total=365)

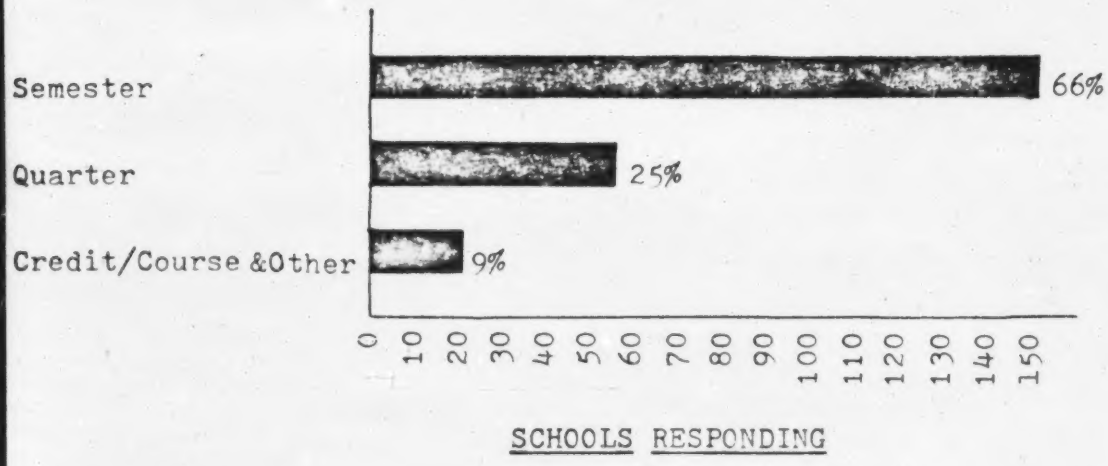
▓ = Returned (total=229)

Graph #8 The Location of Schools Contacted and Those Answering Questionaire

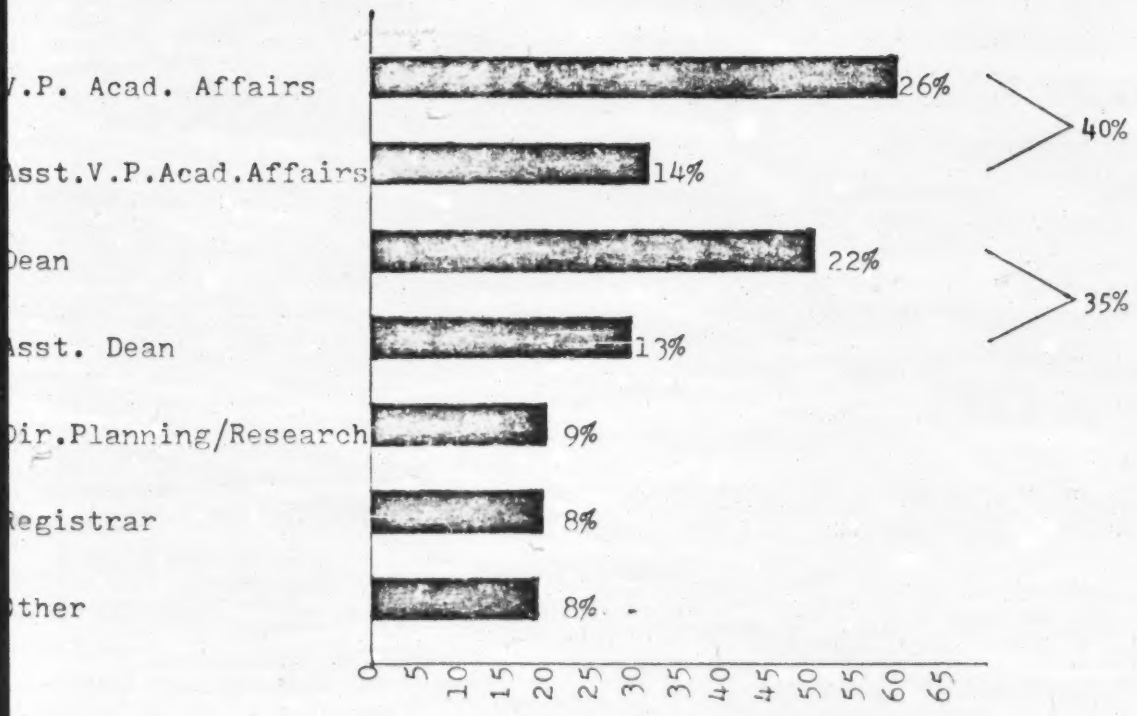


Graph # 9 Characteristics of Schools and Persons Responding

(NOTE: 229 Total Responses)



SCHOOLS RESPONDING



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5. DePaul University, Chicago, IL
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8. Harvard-Radcliffe, Cambridge, MA
9. Luther College, Decorah, IA
10. Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Boston, MA
11. Montclair State College, Upper Montclair, NJ

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15. University of Minnesota-Duluth, MN
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